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The New Youth

BY ALBERT EDWARD DAY

And Jesus, looking upon him, loved him. Mark 10:21.

JESUS was devoted to youth. His most beloved disciple was the youngest one of the twelve. The ideal he held up before all of his followers was that of a heart perpetually young. Of such, he said, is the kingdom of heaven. One of the most scathing judgments which fell from his lips was upon the man who put a stumbling block in the path of youth. "Whoever is a hindrance to any one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him to have a great millstone hung about his neck and be sunk in the sea." That statement seems to have made a profound impression upon the friends of Jesus, for it is recorded in all three of the synoptic gospels. Reading these words we must be aware that if Jesus were here today he would be concerned in what is happening to our youth.

That all is well with the youth of today no one, not even youth itself, would assert. Dr. Fiske, in his valuable work, "The Changing Family," relates the story of an auto accident in which the drunken boy driver was smothered to death in the mud under his overturned car. A fourteen year old girl of the party testified in court: "We planned to go to a party, but we decided it would be too tame, so we agreed to get some 'moon' and have a lively time." They had spent the night in various clubs drinking and dancing. "There were many other boys and girls there," she said, "with plenty of booze in the crowd." Then she called up her mother by 'phone and casually said: "Say, ma, I am in jail up here at Willow Springs. We had an accident. Come up here and try to get me out." Such incidents are not as common as the Association

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Opposed to Prohibition would have us believe, but they are symptomatic of a distressing dare-deviltry in vogue in many social groups.

At a recent party among high school freshmen here in Pittsburgh, all those present, except two, were occupied with cigarettes most of the time. Of course that might have been a pose, a sort of compensation for a freshman inferiority complex, a desire to appear grown up. But it fits in pretty well with many other pictures which exhibit youth as suffering from excessive sophistication, "immersed in the external and superficial, devoid of reverence and respect, impatient with reasonable restraints in conduct and reasonable reticence in speech, slaves to the opinions and customs of their set, empty of real individuality," occupied in school and out with beating the game.

Youthful Sophistication

But, on the other hand, no sane person can indulge in a sweeping condemnation of youth. My own feeling is that on the whole the youth of today are cleaner, more intelligent, more resourceful, more reliable than were the youth with whom I associated in my youth. Beneath all the recklessness and bravado and scorn of our conventions is a manhood and womanhood which awaits the challenge of big things to arise and greatly dare and greatly achieve. Dr. Daniel Poling said recently that when the plans they were inaugurating for prison visitation and for work among the underprivileged and derelicts of New York city were announced, thousands of young men and women volunteered for the difficult job. Youth has not lost its capacity for heroism and for devotion to great causes. It is ready for deeds. The conversation which often disturbs us is not due to the fact that youth is more fleshly minded than yesterday, but because youth is more frank. It has discovered the difference between prudery and purity; between rites and righteousness; between obscurantism and reverence; between formal orthodoxy and genuine faith.

A sober and intimate acquaintance with youth, therefore, furnishes occasion neither for complacent optimism nor for undue pessimism. The new youth is not an angel, neither is he a demon. He is simply an impressionable and immature human being, having the misfortune to be born in a time when things were in a state of flux, when the shadows of post-war disillusionment lay heavily across America, when old authorities were discredited and no new ones had been elected and crowned, when age long traditions and taboos were thrown upon the rubbish heap and others had not had time to be born. The new youth is primarily a bewildered person. His intentions are just as good as any that ever fired the heart of his predecessors, but he is sorely perplexed.

Religious Bewilderment

His bewilderment is first of all a religious one. I do not mean that he is greatly concerned whether he shall join a Baptist, Methodist or Presbyterian church; whether he shall be baptized by sprinkling, pouring or immersion; whether he shall take communion kneeling, standing or sitting; whether he shall listen to a preacher who belongs to the apostolic succession or to one merely ordained by the presbytery. To him, these and many other questions which agitate some people are not religious questions. They are mere quarrels of petty minds, matters of no importance to anybody save dried up ecclesiastics. Youth's bewilderment is much more serious. It is about questions which go to the very heart of religion and life. He wonders if there is any God at all, and if we have any word from him, and if God is available for the puzzles and burdens of life, and if there is possible life with him here and yonder.

The recent book by Halliday, "Robbing Youth of Its Religion," is significant, not merely because it is the actual life story of a living man, but because it discloses just how many young men and women are delivered into the hands of paralyzing skepticism and cynicism. The author left home to enter college in preparation for the ministry. He carried with him a religion which was deeply interwoven with credence in dogmas and definitions evolved in a remote yesterday. At college there was a brilliant professor whose philosophy courses were popular with the students. This young candidate for the ministry soon found himself, along with other admiring freshmen, sitting at the professor's feet laughing at his wit, captivated by his audacity, bowled over by his logic. Proceeding destructively, the professor annihilated, one by one, the old dogmas upon which the boy's religion had been built until, the last pillar gone, the house of faith tumbled into ruins. In desperation, the lad went to the ministers in that college town. But, instead of giving intelligent answers to the lad's questions, they met him with exhortations to leave off thinking and get back to believing; with affirmations that he could not have Jesus unless he embraced all the doctrines which had been woven about him; with everything except that honesty, sympathy and intelligence which a perplexed youth has a right to expect from a minister. The result, of course, was a deepening of doubt and at the end of the year this entry in his diary: "Given up the ministry; no possible chance in that profession for a fellow with my views."

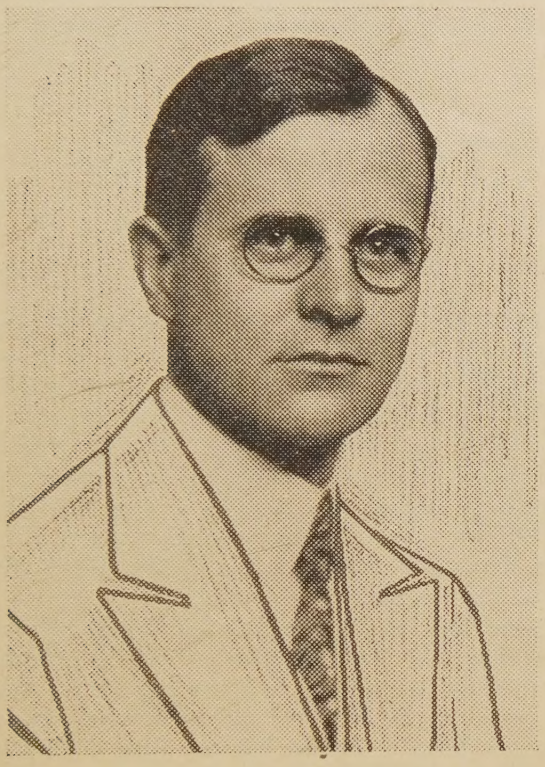
Old Notions, Modern Facts

That was years ago. That disillusioned and bewildered student is now a successful minister in the Church of Christ in Hartford, Connecticut, and he came to that pulpit by a real intellectual and spiritual pilgrimage which has left him in no uncertainty about some of the great realities.

There are many other youths, less fortunate, who have been robbed of religion because their faith was all tangled up with notions which could not live in the presence of facts and arguments which are enunciated from teachers' platforms in every first class college in the land. Having seen demolished or discredited before their eyes opinions which, they took for granted, were part and parcel of religion, they have felt that the intellectual honesty which dumped these opinions overboard must likewise dispense with religion. Many of them have ceased going to church. Others still go

for social reasons or for the sake of their families, but they no longer have convictions or faith. There may be a God, but they are not sure. At any rate they do not expect help from him. They think we are left to find our own way about the world and to discover by experience what was once assumed to be settled by direct revelation. Still others are frankly atheistic. "They know not whence they came and why," nor "how they go and where." These attitudes of the young people in schools and colleges have filtered down through uneducated groups everywhere.

Consequent upon this religious bewilderment is a moral one. As long as youth believed in God and in a direct revelation from God, they felt sure as to what



ALBERT EDWARD DAY

they had to do to please God and win eternal life. They did not always do it. They were often in rebellion. Some nearer pleasure outweighed the wish of a far away God and the lure of a distant heaven. But their rebellion was a conscious repudiation of what they believed to be the will of God. They expected some time to repent and make amends or be punished. But now, with God and immortality unreal, the whole question of morals seems to be up in the air. The Decalogue is under suspicion as a code faked by priests who claimed, from Moses and through Moses from God, an authority which they did not have. The Sermon on the Mount and the moral lectures of St. Paul are lightly dismissed as being, not sure witnesses to reality, but merely products of a cowed and timorous civilization.

Our Fatal Failure

The feeling is abroad that life is an experiment and that, while we ought to learn by experiment what it is safe to do and what it is not safe to do, so far the experiment has been unscientific and unconvincing. Our parents and our ancestors have bungled the whole business and we must strike out on entirely new lines if we are to get anywhere. We haven't greatly impressed them with our success. The way we have messed everything from city administration to international affairs, they think, entitles them to venture forth and make some discoveries of their own about this enterprise we call human life.

Thus having been detached from all authority, the authority of religion because it has been made unreal to them, the authority of past experience because it has seemed to settle nothing, youth is embarked upon a great adventure, conscious of its ignorance, but persuaded that no other course is open. When tempted to criticize them, remember that our failures are responsible for making the adventure seem necessary. Remember, too, under what terrible odds this adventure is being made. Think of the stuff that is being thrust upon them under the guise of wisdom about life. Think of the glamour the rotten movies of our day are throwing about the vices. From the screen there is a perfect bombardment of the minds of youth with suggestions that life lies in the direction where many of us know that it does not lie. If I were a devil, bent upon the ruin of the race, I would not ask for stronger allies than the forces that at present control the moving pictures of America.

Intelligence in Action Needed

Not so long ago, by a review in a dependable magazine I was persuaded to purchase a book which purported to be an anthology of the best of the year's productions of the younger writers in America. I have a pretty strong stomach, intellectually and morally, but I could not sit at the table spread by those authors. After a few chapters I put them aside with a feeling akin to that which always overtakes me when my boat strikes a storm at sea. The drama, the novel, the short story, in many of their recent expressions, seem to be in conspiracy to befuddle youth about the meaning and values of life. Youth is bewildered, bewildered about everything, about the values once symbolized by the good old words, honor, truth, veracity, obedience, purity, modesty, virtue, sobriety, respectability. If any one can listen to youth's many questions without a heartache for the boys and girls who have such problems crowded upon them when they ought to be carefree and happy, he is a strange person indeed.

The answer to this bewilderment is not denunciation but sympathetic, Christian intelligence in action. There must be sympathy because, until one gets the viewpoint of youth, he cannot understand how they arrived at their present perplexity and the road they must travel to regain certainty. There must be intelligence, because mere emotional resentment, or dogmatic assertions of what they must believe, or adroit manipulations of scripture texts or attempts to bolster up a fading tradition by the shrewd jugglery of history and by the declarations of pseudo-science, or efforts to "rush" the mind, will utterly fail. Facts and laws

must be recognized and honestly faced. There must be no furtiveness and no evasions. Any sign of nervousness in the presence of any discovery in science or any revelation of history will destroy confidence. There must be Christian intelligence in action because Christianity is supremely a functional religion. Its case ultimately rests not with theory but with experience, not with logic only but with life. The best answer to paganism or skepticism alike is a demonstration that Christianity works, that Christ is the way, the truth and the life.

This answer must begin in the home. The most tragic thing about Halliday's book is the chapter in which, as he reviews his experience, he is compelled to say, "A Christian home first robbed me of my religion." His parents were pious people but they had taught him, as indispensable to the religion of Jesus, ideas which, after contact with college life, he felt compelled to discard. Consequently, when he threw out the ideas, the religion went too. Only the other day I was talking to a man whose father is a minister in good standing in one of our great Protestant churches. That boy never goes to church and is holding aloof from religion. Conversation revealed that the minister-father had cluttered up religion with a lot of theoretical trash and when the boy, in his intellectual awakening, say how trashy it all was, when his intelligence and sense of justice revolted against the picture of God and of the future as presented by his father, he turned his back upon the religion which seemed inseparable from those once acceptable but now grotesque notions. The one motto which ought to be on the wall of every home is: "Never teach a child anything which he will later have to unlearn."

The Problem of Youth—and of Parents

The problem of youth is first of all, as has often been said, the problem of parents. They are bewildered because we have failed, because, as two daughters contemptuously declared: "Parents are cowards because they will not confess what they actually know and actually think. They are hypocrites because they try to make us believe them to be what they are not; they are dishonest because they try to make us do what they will not do and be what they will not be." Sympathy that will inspire youth's confidence in our ability to understand, intelligence that will persuade them that we can help them with their most difficult problems, and above all, a living demonstration that faith, hope and love are the supreme values of life—these alone will make home a guarantee against wasted youth.

The same answer must be given by the church. An honest minister in a free pulpit, set at liberty from heavy administrative duties to keep pace with modern knowledge, and capable of matching every scientific fact with moral and spiritual values new and old, is the first requisite. The second is like unto it; a wise educational program which will transform the church from a mere "place for sitting still" into a laboratory for the personal discovery of those moral and spiritual truths which make for life and lead ultimately to the cross.

Finally, there must be the establishment and nurture of Christian universities where boys and girls who go into business and technical employments and the professions, as well as those who take courses in liberal arts, may receive a truly Christian attitude toward their life work, a truly Christian outlook upon society and a truly Christian interpretation of the universe. The bewilderment of youth is in large part due to a dogmatic and presumptuous science which tries to monopolize the mind with the scientific method and which ignores all those values and meanings which lie outside the range of scientific instruments. There is a loud call today for institutions of learning where complete academic freedom is supplemented by training in those meanings and values which give significance to the life of the individual and guard the citadels of social welfare.

The Set of Life

By William F. McDowell

I must be about my Father's business. *Luke* 2:49.

EVERYTHING about the life of Jesus Christ is interesting. Touch it at any point and it responds in a vital manner. I choose this morning to think of it in the light of its unity. Our own lives are distracted and divided. His was free from distraction, though not free from difficulty. One of the things that kept it free from distraction was that it was like his seamless robe, all of one piece.

There are two or three ways in which our own lives show their lack of unity. There is wretched contradiction in most of us between what we know and what we do, between our knowledge and our conduct. There is another between what we say and what we are, between our speech and our character. There is another which is quite as serious in the division between the parts of our lives. We do not keep the straight course; we do not run the straight race.

It is with reference to this fact that I want to study the life of Jesus with you. I want that we shall see as clearly as possible the way his life kept straight through in the same direction; or, to change the figure, the way it retained an unvarying tone; or, to use still another figure, the way it showed itself as all of one quality.

Jesus Faced Forward

Take this episode from which this text is taken. There are many ways into it, but for our purpose this morning let us consider just one, namely, the way this Lad's face was set. He was surrounded by the noblest institutions, engaged in conversation with the best people of his race and time. He was responding to the mother who loved him and whom he loved, and all of this naturally appeals to us. But the thing I cannot get away from is the way in

which the story represents the way his face and heart were set. To be sure, this is only one point on the line of his life. Nevertheless, every later point harmonizes with this. The significance of a youth's purpose is always tested by the outcome of it in life. But there is no doubt as to this point on the line of his life or the purpose in the heart of him.

And I am pausing long enough to say that a part of the tragedy of human experience is due to the necessity that comes to so many persons, of changing their life direction half way through their lives.

WILLIAM F. MCDOWELL

They do not give life at life's beginning the direction it ought to keep until life's end.

You can touch the life of Jesus at any half dozen significant points later, but always you get the same impression, always see that same direction, always catch that same tone. Take, for example, his experience in what we call the temptation. Here is the suggestion made to him that he make bread out of the stones lying about. It did not appear to be an ignoble suggestion in itself. It was not a suggestion that he should steal bread or deprive others of their legitimate supply. It proposed that he should convert the useless into the useful and satisfy legitimate hunger. But it fills our hearts to this day to see the prompt reply and refusal. But we do not always see the relation between a life based upon every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God and being about the Father's business. By and by, in his life, having refused to make bread when he was hungry after forty days of fasting, he will make bread in quantities for people who are hungry after a few hours of abstinence from food. He will be about his Father's business making bread for them when they hunger, but he will not be about his Father's business if he goes to making bread for himself even when he is hungry. He will be about his Father's business when he keeps the current of his power turned upon his task. He will not be about it if he goes to using it for his own benefit. And at last they will say of him, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." But it is all part of, and has the same quality of, that marvelous statement made by this boy of twelve in the temple. One day his Father's business will lead him to the cross and, precisely as in other instances, he keeps on being about it.

Winning Without Compromise

Or you can take another episode in that same temptation story. He was asked by the tempter to do what he had come to do, namely to win the world, by bowing down to the prince of this world. And his Father's business committed to him was winning this world, but his Father's business also was winning it without compromise. With evil in the world his Father's business was winning the world from evil, but not by making a bargain with the representative of evil. In the temple he said, I must be about his business. With the world spread out before him, as he stood on the mountain top, he said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou worship." And in that story you get another point on the line of his life that shows the direction unchanged, the tone undimmed. It makes the heart beat fast just to see how steadfastly he held his course.

Or take another illustration. This particular scene is laid in the temple. One day he went into the village church at Nazareth where he had been brought up. He is a man now, and he is worshiping, as his custom was, with his parents and the people who knew him and them. And he stood up to read one of the loveliest passages of all literature. The priests could drone it out so as not to make anybody's pulse beat any faster and so as not to give anyone a choking sensation in his throat as he listened. And all at once he read it with the emphasis upon the personal terms. And as you listen, you get another point on the line of his life and see that the direction of it is not changed. His Father's business is opening the eyes that are blind, the ears that are deaf, and setting the bruised at liberty.

Victor Hugo said, "There is no army in the world that is so powerful as an idea whose time has come." Here Jesus is with this idea. It has come. That undivided life can walk with sure foot through a perplexed and perplexing world. There is no other way to keep from entanglements that are fatal.

Straight to the Cross

And he came at last to those later hours walking that straight way that he had come from the day in the temple, coming straight up to the mount and the cross. We know the human way of facing those things, and he knew the human way and would have been glad if there had been any true way by which that last cup could have been escaped. Nevertheless, instead of turning his back as he came to it and changing his di-

rection, instead of seeking to go around the mountain, he simply followed the direction that he had come. The tone of his life had carried on and he said, "I will still be about my Father's business. His will, not this temporary will of mine, shall be done." And it is no wonder at all that a person like this could at last look his Father straight in the face and say, "I have finished the work thou gavest me."

I see no way by which men or groups can save themselves from the distractions, the difficulties and the confusions of life other than Christ's way. I see no way by which young persons can live and yet be of highest usefulness and happiness except by this way of giving life, at life's beginning, the direction it ought to keep until the end. I see no way by which nations or churches can save themselves from torment except by running a straight race by God's good grace. And if a person or a group, a church or a nation, has failed to take the straight course either in general or in any particular issue, there is no other way than for them now to take it and go steadily forward. Of course, such a life will not escape difficulties. Long ago Hutton said, "It is a weary way to God." People who walk with God know that it is a weary way with him. It is a weary way for him. And I do not doubt but that the other thing that Hutton said is also true, "It is a wearier way far with any demigod." It is a wearier way for any demigod, or with any demigod, than with the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. If our own nation just now were with Christlike purpose to set itself for the accomplishment of peace and righteousness in the world, with all the difficulties that attend that way, and not waver or turn aside, not seek some round-about path to the goal, it might not escape crucifixion, but it would walk with the Lord of life and peace at last into the gates of peace. It is a weary way to peace, but an infinitely wearier one to a partial peace.

When One's Life Is Needed

And the same thing is true with the problem of personal usefulness and service. Many years ago was published a pretty little story called, I think, "Vesty of the Basins." The scene of the story was a fishing village on the Maine cost. Vesty was the wife of a fisherman who was in the community on the theory, I sometimes think, that Victor Hugo once expressed, "God could not be everywhere, so he made mothers." One day a party of summer visitors went out from the village in a little pleasure launch for a holiday. People on the shore saw to their horror that the little party had been caught in a squall and were threatened with utter wreck. Vesty's husband leaped into his stout fisherman's boat and with almost superhuman strength rowed out to where the launch was tossing, threw them a rope and again with almost superhuman strength rowed them to shore. And as he stepped out on the white sand, his heart gave out and he dropped dead. Then Vesty, not knowing that she was saying a great thing—a thing that might serve as an epitaph for a person like Jesus Christ, if a person like him ever needed an epitaph—looked at her husband and said: "All his life, when he had anything that anybody needed, he just gave it to them. At last they needed his life and he gave them that."

Now, that is exactly the way one feels about the unity of Christ's life. All his life, when he had anything that anybody needed, he gave it to them. He gave them the truth that set them free. He gave them healing for their diseases. He gave them forgiveness for their sins. He gave them courage and strength in their temptations and difficulties. He gave them life. At last they needed his life, and as his custom was not simply with reference to church-going but with reference to being about his Father's business, he gave them that.

And this is my word to those who look out from the vantage of youth at the great world of service and life. Give life at life's beginning, as Jesus did, the direction that life ought to keep until life's end. You can claim the fellowship of Christ in this way of living. You can be sure of the power of Christ for this way of living and the blessing of men and God as the result of it.

Confucianist Christians

By W. Russell Bowie

And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. Mark 1:27.

IT IS a familiar thing to hear people declare that they do not believe in foreign missions. "Why should we be spending our energies to convert the heathen abroad," they say, "when there are plenty of heathen who need to be worked with here at home?" I do not agree with the implications of that question. Nor do I agree altogether even with its phraseology. "Heathen" is not a discriminating nor accurate word. Nevertheless, it can readily be admitted that, whatever be our ideas about the non-Christians abroad, it is quite true that there are many non-Christians or near-Christians at home who need to be convinced of the Christian gospel. I propose, therefore, that today we confine our thought to the home field, and particularly that we should attempt to make complete Christians out of our home-bred Confucianists.

"But what does that mean?" you may be asking. "We are none of us Chinamen." No, but I did not say Chinamen. I said Confucianists. For the interesting fact is that there are multitudes of Confucianists here in America, and doubtless a respectable sprinkling of them in our own congregation. It is true that they do not call themselves by Confucius' name. They have no temples nor pagodas to worship in. But they do not need these. They are Confucianists by such extraordinarily native instinct that they can worship Confucius in chambers of commerce or in Christian churches quite as well. They are not theoretically in-

structed in the tenets of their religion. But in their minds and hearts they are orthodox and obedient followers of the good old bearded sage of China.

I

Who then was Confucius, and what is Confucianism? As we may or may not remember, Confucius was born about five hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ. He adopted, more or less as a matter of routine, the primitive nature worship which he found in the China of his age—the worship of heaven, of the spirits of the earth, of sun and moon and mountains and rivers—together with the propitiation of the local spirits who were supposed to bring good or evil to a man's house and home. But the great contribution of Confucius was a new code of behavior for men in their life together. Even so, the word "new" must be explained. It was new in that Confucius systematized the rules of moral and social behavior as these had never been systematized before; but his materials were not new. He said most emphatically that he was no creator, but a transmitter. He referred to the examples of the past for his guidance. Although he lived five hundred years before Christ, he was possessed by the idea that his world was afflicted with a most lamentable modernism. He turned back to what he called the "good old times." If people could begin to live again according to the fashion of the fathers and the great-grandfathers, all would be well.

And of much that he taught, it could truly be said that it *was* well. Confucius urged men to think and to seek knowledge. He bade them look beneath the surface of things to those deep principles on which enduring life must be built. He challenged the rulers of the state with the noblesse oblige of their privilege. He taught common men that there are principles of duty and obligation on which alone home and family life could be established. He taught benevolence, though one must not be benevolent to exaggeration. When asked what he would say of the idea that injury should be requited with kindness, Confucius replied, "With what then will you requite kindness? Requite injury with justice, and kindness with kindness." Together with benevolence, the other four of the five cardinal virtues which he taught were these: uprightness of mind, by which he meant moral excellence; propriety in demeanor, which was the observance of convention; practical sagacity, and good faith. All five of these could be summed up in the one word which expressed his way of life—"reciprocity," or "considerateness." "What you do not want done to yourself," he said, "do not do to others."

Confucianists in Silk Hats

Obviously, that was no mean code for man's living. It could result in dignified and honorable behavior—a polite and kindly good-will within the limits of commonsense, a carefulness of conduct according to which men could not go far astray.

That is why Confucianism is a most pleasing and acceptable religion to a great many persons outside of China. That is why, in many lands of the west, Confucianism has innumerable disciples in tall silk hats and cutaway coats instead of mandarins' robes. One does not have to call himself a Confucianist to be one. Confucianism is not so much a creed as a social instinct. It is the acceptance of a kind of rule of life which commends itself because it is polite, well-ordered, and reasonable; which gives an evident moral respectability and does not set up unreasonable, disturbing ideals in theory, nor in practice require too much.

But Confucianism has the defects of its virtues.

Reverence for the Past

In the first place, there is danger in its exceeding reverence for the past. Ancestor-worship may become, not a challenge, but a chain; and that is what it has largely become in China. Men's eyes are forever turned backwards. They must judge everything that is and everything that might be, first of all by the test of its conformity to what always was. With all the immense virtues of its stability, China has yet been cursed with what has almost been stagnation. Nothing new must happen lest it should disturb the sleeping dragon of the past.

Of course this devotion to the god of yesterday is not peculiar to China. Simply, Confucius, and China after him, had the grasp of mind to organize into a religious system this instinctive devotion to precedent which is a part of all life everywhere. When the first of the trilobites to leave the Paleozoic seas attempted that experiment of remaining on land with which the history of our earthly existence commences, doubtless the other trilobites had very little use for this bold-faced departure from the unbroken example of his oceanic ancestors. When that first genius among our arboreal forebears determined to try the interesting experiment of walking on two feet instead of on all fours, he was doubtless an object of indignant aversion to the congregation who watched him from the branches. Who among all his ancestors, as far back as the forest could remember, had ever heard of so abominable and undignified a method of locomotion as this? When the first cave-man attempted to domesticate fire, the other members of his group probably looked upon him as a dangerous lunatic, crazily departing from the safe habits of his ancestors who had been content to shiver in their skins. At every stage of the world's change and development, there would have been no change and development if ancestor-worship had had its way.

And the curious thing is that our personalities can be unconsciously divided, so that, when part of our energies are progressive, the rest of us may turn its face as solemnly to the past as any Chinese mandarin burning incense before the votive tablets in his grandfather's pagoda. We may be progressive with our machines, and reactionary with our minds. We may be modern in our work and medieval in our idea of worship. We may lend our imagination the wings of the wireless and the power of the electric dynamo when we go out to widen the empire of business, but we may creep along at the pace of the stage-coach era in all our conceptions of the advance of the kingdom of God. There are whole compartments of our interest in which we

suppose that loyalty to our inheritance means that nothing shall be changed, when, as a matter of fact, any such idea may be a very stupid disloyalty to the real spirit which made that inheritance great. It is possible for us to be like the man who always went about in shabby and rumpled clothes, and who once was affectionately taken to task by a friend for his unworthy appearance. "It is so unlike what you ought to be," said this friend—"you, the son of your father—for your father always prided himself on his immaculate appearance." "What do you mean," replied the man indignantly, "by saying that I do not look the way my father used to look twenty-five years ago? This is my father's coat that I have on!"

Conventional Religion

In the second place, the religion of Confucius is a religion of convention. It has its message about the inner spirit, but its real message has to do with the outer code. A man must behave so and so because respectability prescribes that he should. "The not making a movement contrary to the rules of propriety, this is the way for a ruler to cultivate his person," said Confucius. "If you lead the people with correctness, who will dare not to be correct?"

And this is true. If the pattern of correctness is made stiff enough, people will very obediently conform. There is no tyranny like the tyranny of convention—

> The canon of the social code,
> The little laws that lackeys make,
> The futile decalogue of mode.

All of us in close-knit social life are affected by convention. It has, of course, its values. Convention can take the crystalized opinions of good sense and make them into social habits which we accept automatically without having to go through the time-wasteful process of thinking them out all anew each time for ourselves. A small boy learns a convention of washing his face, an act by no means instinctive, because this is the convention of all well-mannered folk. We learn conventions of how to conduct ourselves at table, and how to greet one another on the street, and of what to do when we come to call. But the trouble with conventions is that those things which are meant to be smoothly regulated means to right behavior may become substitutes for right behavior. We grow more concerned with what people think than with what we are, more anxious to seem than to be. A man who would be ashamed to go among his business associates with a hole in his coat, may not be ashamed to go there with a rent a yard wide in his conscience, since this latter is invisible. A woman would be mortified to go out to some social function until she had had every line of her dress exactly adjusted, but she may keep going on year after year indifferent to the fact that every possibility of fine purpose in her daily living is lying at loose ends in her soul. The little mask of correctness which we wear may satisfy us when we look into the deceptive mirror of things as they seem to be. Conformity to convention, which is a very comfortable and widespread religion, may kill the great desires which ought to stir in human souls.

In the third place, the religion which Confucius taught and which his thousands of disciples, both in the West and in the East, most happily continue in, is the religion of caution. Said Confucius in one matchlessly revealing sentence, "The cautious seldom err."

Religion of Caution

There is the supreme wisdom, many will declare. "The cautious seldom err. But these enthusiasts who are always going beyond the bounds of prudence and commonsense do err. They run into all sorts of uncertainties. They go plunging along roads the ends of which they cannot foresee. Half the time they may be going in wrong directions. They make the most amazing blunders. If they had been cautious they would have escaped all that. If they had been sensible enough to play safe, they never would have run those inconvenient risks." All of which is true. And more is true. The cautious seldom err. Also they seldom arrive. They seldom do anything. They stay where they are and let well enough alone. And, like Nineveh and Babylon, they presently are gently buried by the drifting desert dust.

W. Russell Bowie

Thus Confucianism, western as well as eastern, the unacknowledged and unconscious as well as the explicit kind, has its drawbacks. And now I would ask that those of you, if such there be, who have been very contented Confucianists, should turn to consider Christianity.

II

If there is anything which is a contrast to the spirit of Confucianism, it is Christianity. And, if there is anything which Christianity is not, it is not ancestor-

worship, it is not convention, and it is not caution.

It is true that the world into which Christianity came clung to all these things. The world generally does. Confucius was not alone the sage of China; he was also the spokesman for much that is instinctive in all races and cultures. The Jewish nation, when Jesus came, was full of ancestor-worship. The whole religion was tied with passionate attachment to the past. It was the business of the Scribes to hand down the tradition of the elders, so that from generation to generation the gathered opinion of the authorities became a lengthening chain. Life must be regulated thus and so, because thus and so it had been regulated in the past. What Moses had taught, or had been supposed to teach, men must copy centuries after. What Ezra had worked out as the temple ritual, must be scrupulously repeated down the years. The shadow of the great patterns of antiquity fell across the whole plain of the life of the day.

A Tremendous Figure Arises

But Christianity arose when one tremendous Figure deliberately stepped beyond that shadow. He stood upon the rim of a new world, clothed as in the splendor of the rising sun. He knew the beauty of the life and the worship which had been of old. He had read the ancient books of Israel and knew that all the greatness of their inheritance was his. But he knew the mightier meaning of the Living God. Religion was not merely a tradition out of yesterday. It was a new experience for today. "They said of old time" thus and so, said Jesus, "but I say unto you"—a mightier and more amazing revelation. He taught men to look into their own souls and to look into the world around them and see the immediate potencies of God. He talked of the future more than of the past. The messianic age was not a golden dream that had been. It was a golden dawn to come. The multitude sensed immediately this new quality in Jesus himself and in his message. "What new doctrine is this?" they asked. They saw that he did not teach as the Scribes. He did not base his authority upon proof-texts of old tradition. He based it upon the authority of the results which religion could show in men's lives now. They saw his message fall among the faggots of the old teachings like an ardent and tremendous flame. He himself was young, only thirty-three years of age at most when his life was finished, and the men who gathered round him were young. Most of them were young in years, and all of them young and daring in their spirits. The glory of the world for Jesus lay ahead and not behind, and it was ahead that he faced. There were no barriers to his belief of what the love of God could do. That is why he sometimes despaired of the old men. But he always trusted in the children. It was of a child that he said, "Of such is the kingdom of God." For the child represented hope and expectancy and the splendor of imagination to which neither timidity nor disillusionment had established any bounds.

Wherever the spirit of Jesus himself has prevailed, the genius of Christianity has been and always must be forward-looking. He created in his fellowship the magnificent power of his own expectancy. He made men no longer set up the limitations of their ancestors as a perpetual idea to which they must bow down. He made them look instead to the as yet unfinished powers of the human soul, rising triumphant with the wings of the Living God. And most wonderful of all, Jesus himself has made Christianity, not merely a worship of his own figure as he moved in Galilee, and not merely a repetition of the teachings which fell then from his lips, but rather a belief in his undying spirit which can interpret for us the new meanings of the living Christ today. "The works that I do, shall ye do," he said, "and greater works shall ye do because I go to my Father." The Christianity which is true to Jesus Christ asks, not only what he said in the times of the New Testament, but what he would be saying in our world, and what his spirit does say within our sensitive consciences today.

If you desire to be Christians, I bid you ponder these things. It is well to have a loyalty to the past, but that in itself does not constitute Christianity. It is well to reverence the beautiful things which are ancestral, but neither does that constitute Christianity. Christianity is that immense energy of the soul which assimilates all that has been great in the past in order that this may result in the power to create a mightier future. When, in religious thinking or in the practices of the church, the inevitable facts of new times bring necessity for change, if you merely oppose these because they happen not to be congenial to you, then you are as yet only a Confucianist and not a Christian. You are worshiping your ancestral tablets in the pagodas of your conservatism, instead of standing on the hilltops to watch the dawning of the purposes of God. Christianity never asks of you any abatement of your genuine loyalties, nor any diminution of your reverence for that which has been proved beautiful and true. But Christianity does forbid that you should ever simply stand still as blind objectors to the new, without creative suggestions of your own as to what the facts of life require. Whenever any new thought or new thing arises, you cannot as Christians merely say, "This is new and I will have none of it." You must, as Christians, say, "In so far as this is good, I will welcome it; in so far as this is mistaken, I will try to correct it; in so far as this is imperfect, I will try to make it better; but, because it may represent the on-moving power of the living God, therefore I intend to understand what challenge it may have for my life."

Jesus' Religion Not Conventional

As Christianity does not mean ancestor-worship, so also it does not mean convention. The first-century world of Palestine soon found that out in regard to Jesus. The conventional people could not understand him. They came at length to hate him because his spirit would not be shut within the little fences of their forms. The Pharisees had all sorts of particularities of dress and of observance, and a thousand rules of ritualistic conduct which Jesus very gently but very definitely set aside. They were baffled and made indignant by his attitude. They could not imagine how any-

one could be a good man except according to their meticulous specifications of piety and correctness. They had no confidence in that instinctive human desire after God upon which Jesus dared to build. They were afraid of ordinary people, and believed that these had to be kept in control by the proper religious conventions. Like Confucius, they trusted in the "rules of propriety," and they came to have a deadly fear of Jesus when they saw the expulsive power of new ideals which he was scattering in the hearts of common men.

Now it is quite true that in every age the moral code of Confucius, or the religious conventions of the Scribes and Pharisees, may be a safer thing for society than the influence of Jesus. They may let society stagnate and the church stagnate, but at least they do not threaten it with spiritual dynamite. It does lead to a more comfortable process if we can smoothe and stroke Christianity down to a polite convention, so that it will not have in it any dangerous possibilities of change. Keen old Samuel Butler was right when he wrote in the last century of people in England that they would have been "equally surprised at hearing the Christian religion doubted or at seeing it practised." There are many of us who like to be orthodox if Christianity is kept sufficiently remote from life; but we do not want our social or ecclesiastical conventions to be destroyed by too active a form of religion. Yet if we are to be Christians, we must face the fact that Christianity does come to challenge old prejudices that stand in the way of the advancing kingdom of God.

If we are to be Christians, we must be ready to consider with an open mind new doubts which are abroad in our world concerning the right of any man to make or keep unlimited money irresponsibly; new thoughts concerning a whole revaluation of our business standards in terms, not of possession and power, but rather of service; new ideals concerning our nation in its relationship with the rest of the peoples of the world. We have got to stand face to face with the living implications of the spirit of Jesus Christ and answer the question, "What does Christianity as a gospel, not for keeping my world complacently comfortable, but for making it over until it shall more nearly resemble the kingdom of the purposes of God—what does *this* Christianity mean for me?"

Christianity Is Daring

And if these things be true, then it is obvious that Christianity certainly does not mean caution. The lips of Confucius, but never the lips of Christ, could say, "The cautious seldom err." His spirit was reckless as a flame. He knew the consequences of the things he set out to do, but he never counted them. Single-handed, he faced the gathering hostility of the backward-looking, conventional, and cautious leaders of his time. Single-hearted, he risked everything and seemed to lose everything. He moved unflinchingly along the road that led through Gethsemane, up the hill of Calvary, to the dark cross waiting there. And by that tremendous hazard of the cross, he won the immortal throne of his kingdom over the imagination of mankind.

Whenever Christianity has been cautious, it has been a cheap and contemptible thing. Whenever it has been true to Jesus and bold with the boldness of his spirit, then it has been mighty. Its supreme gospel has ever been the gospel of a contradiction, the gospel of the spirit that flings all the prudent considerations of its world away, in order that it may build the only throne of spiritual greatness by which the world is truly mastered. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," said St. Paul. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." By that incautious gospel of the cross, Paul lit the torches of a new meaning by which alone our western civilization may some day be redeemed. "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also," was the magnificent unconscious tribute which the mob in Thessalonica paid to the Christians preaching there. Now as then, the true Christianity is a force which turns the world upside down, in order that its twisted and distorted values may be turned again God-side up.

A century and a half ago there lived in England one of those great souls which understand and interpret Christ. His name was William Carey, and he was the path-breaker of modern missions. He wanted to go and carry the gospel of Jesus to India, that the kingdom of the love of God might be established also there. Even his fellow-ministers opposed him stubbornly. No such venture had been heard of before. It had not been attempted. Why should it be attempted now? It seemed to them reckless to the point of madness. Conservatism and caution cried out against it. Then William Carey, with his affection for these men undimmed, but with his own great vision blazing the way far beyond the little circles in which their timid spirits moved, made this magnificent answer: "You excel me in wisdom, especially in foreseeing difficulties. Therefore I want to advise with you, but to execute without you."

In every age there are moments when the spirit of Christianity must come to that decision. Let us take counsel with all the wisdom of the world. Let us know and reverently remember all that has been best and most beautiful in yesterday. But Christianity is forever an advance into a wilderness of life which is still unconquered. And if you and I are to be Christians, then it must come to pass that the crowd around us must look at us with that same amazement with which they looked at Jesus when they said: "What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him."

Via, et Veritas, et Vita

YOU never attained to Him?" "If to attain
Be to abide, then that may be."
"Endless the way, followed with how much pain!"
"The way was He."

ALICE MEYNELL.

The Crisis of Christ

Joseph Fort Newton*

Will ye also go away? Lord, to whom shall we go? John 6:67, 68.

I

THE early ministry of Jesus in Galilee was a springtime of blossom and bird-song. In the power of the Spirit he returned from the wilderness of temptation, his heart aglow, his mind made up, preaching the gospel of God. Throngs hung upon his lips, drawn by the winsomeness of his personality, the lyric loveliness of his words, and the wonder of his works of mercy. He made men glad about God, glad about life, equally by his incredible approachableness and his understanding kindness, no less than by the warmth and wealth of his vision. In unclouded glory the love and power of God shone in his face, and wrought in his healing hands.

The vision of the kingdom of God was so vivid in the mind of Jesus, and so radiant in his heart, that he had hope that the people of his fathers would hear and heed, and so avert the doom which he saw impending. But, alas, it was not to be so. When he began his work in Judea, at first there was response, and then an icy enmity, made the more implacable by the fear that the whole nation might be led off after him. As between the restless political radicalism of Galilee and the rigid religious bigotry of Judea, he did not fit into the scheme of his age. There was no room for his gospel of truth working by love, which revealed the futility of violence in reaching any high social end. His effort to win the synagogue from the Pharisees failed; his attempt to cleanse the temple met defeat. Before the end of the first summer he knew that with the majority of his generation his ministry was doomed to be misunderstood, and he himself to be despised and rejected of men.

The Hard Way of the Cross

Such was the scene and setting of the Crisis of Christ. It was the old temptation again; and even while the people were trying to press upon his head the crown of rebellion against Rome, he knew that he must walk the high, hard way of the cross, wearing a crown of thorns. Suddenly he turned and put the fickle, sensation-loving crowds to the test—those who wanted him to turn stones into bread and dazzle them with signs—and if they had been fascinated by his charm they were staggered by his challenge: "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in you." Truly, it is one thing to come to the point of religion, and another thing to come religiously to every point. It was a hard saying; the multitudes melted away, frightened by his strange, stern demands, leaving the disciples themselves bewildered and half-terrified. "Will ye also go away?" Jesus asked, ready to be deserted and left alone, as he was at the last. The little group renewed their vows in a kind of awed desperation: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

It was no mere mood of irritation or depression, but a quick and piercing insight into the human realities about him. While his faith in God was serene, he had no illusions about human nature, and he knew that mankind may any day suffer a swift and ghastly slip backward, losing its vision of the best. Jesus, apparently, did not believe in the idea of the inevitability of the progress of man onward and upward forever. He faced the possibility of an earth swept of every trace of faith and faithfulness: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on earth?" If he told men that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, he did not mean that it will come automatically, by evolution or otherwise. Whether the final attitude of humanity will be Godward or not, he did not say. It can be and may be, though there is neither certainty nor inevitability; and Jesus did not deceive himself. He knew that there is doubt, but he believed that there is hope.

The method of Jesus changed; he abandoned first the synagogue, then his open-air pulpit, and last of all the lake-side itself. In places of quiet retreat he began to tell his disciples of the exodus soon to be accomplished, and to prepare them for it. Over the later parables a shadow falls; we hear of "a far country," of a "great gulf fixed," of a hand at the window waving away guests who have come too late, of an outer darkness, of a son cast out of the vineyard and slain, of a sword that divides father and child, of a cup of forsakenness drained. On the day of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus sought to dramatize, in an acted parable, the genius of his enterprise; but to no avail. His disciples thought he had won, but he knew that he had lost. There was no fruit on the barren fig-tree, "nothing but leaves." It was his last appeal to his people, and all that remained was the love that lives on when faith and hope are dead—the love that endureth all things, and therefore can not be defeated.

II

Once again, as in every generation since his advent, it is the Crisis of Christ in our age. Just before the world war, Harnack said in Germany: "If darkness shall ever come over the world, and God and every spiritual virtue grow dim, it may be that the personity of Jesus will save us." Darkness did come over the world, as we well know—darkness and confusion, and the face of God was hidden—and the personality of Jesus did save us from utter despair. Again it is an hour of decision and destiny for the church. It is not that we have failed to take Jesus literally; the tragedy is that we have failed to take him seriously. For ages we have had a religion of what others said about Jesus, worshiping an image of him graven by our logic, making a Christ of our opinion and adoring it. The day

*Dr. Newton preached this sermon in the City Temple, London, May 14, 1930, before three thousand ministers gathered under the auspices of the Congregational Union of England and Wales and the Free Church council, to celebrate the anniversary of the Colonial Missionary society.

has dawned when we must draw nearer to Jesus himself, enter into his mind, obey his law of love, though it lead us to the cross, and act upon his vision of the love of God and the kingdom of heaven, or religion as he taught it will disappear from among us.

Again the multitudes melt away, disillusioned and distracted, leaving the followers of Jesus in dire dismay. Either we must live dangerously in the world today, making an unprecedented adventure toward Jesus, relying wholly on the guidance of his living Spirit, as at the beginning, or the church will disintegrate and decay. Our ancient contending theologies, and their counterpart in the disunion and woe of the peoples, are doomed; they do not signify. They are not refuted, but simply passed by and forgotten as having no relation to the life of our age. No, there must be a new advance in faith and fellowship, a new dimension of insight and understanding, a revolution which will save the world from its recurring disasters of war which break the heart of humanity and blaspheme God. Else religion will be cast aside as an obsolete futility, as it is in Russia, and man will try to build his life upon another basis, with what results no one knows. One thing must be plain to all: religion as we now have it, impotent and uncreative—a mere huddle of sects—is not equal to the issues of this strange, stupendous age.

Materialism and Spiritual Reality

What is the real issue before our age? Briefly and basically it is the issue between a materialistic, deterministic, nationalistic outlook and the vision of spiritual reality, the ethics of moral freedom, and the hope of world fellowship. Deeper down is the deepest issue of all, whether man is hereafter to think of his life in terms of cosmic meaning and concern, and that involves no less a matter than the life and death of society as we know it. The advent of atheism in our age, amounting almost to theophobia, is not an accident, and it shows that our thoughts of God have gone tragically awry. It is a new temper, very different from the agnosticism of the last generation, many of whose teachers were exemplars of the devout. Mill, Huxley and Morley were agnostics, but they regretted it. Whereas the modern atheist, glibly skeptical and gaily cynical, proudly affirms that there is no God, and that he is glad of it. A militant atheism will be a blessing, if it forces us to take our faith in God seriously and makes us redig the wells of living water.

For, without a new vision of God as the unity of humanity in our age, without a deeper experience of God as the truth that makes all other truth true, what hope have we of building a stable peace and a creative good will among men, which is the supreme social issue of today? How else can we reach and melt the sinister faith, the dark fear, which dictated the desperate saying of Chiras in the Laws of Plato, a faith held by many good and honest men in our day: that what men call peace is an empty name, since "there is ever between all states a secret war." Manifestly it is faith, and yet again faith, on which our hope rests—faith in a God above man and within man, faith that man exists to surpass himself, faith in the vitality of moral forces and the efficacy of ideas. If our faith fades, if God becomes only the shadow of man cast upon the screen of his fear or fancy, our hope is doomed to defeat. Here again the personality of Jesus and his vision of God saves us, keeping alive the faith that there is, at the heart of things, a sure ground of hope and a source of power.

To try our faith to the utmost, at the very time when we are praying and planning for peace, a horde of divisive facts and forces are acutely active. In the small world in which we are now living, its vast distances abolished by the magic of science, the races of men are drawn together, jammed together, and rancor runs rife. In the British commonwealth this problem is widely distributed, yet not the less urgent, but in America it is at our door and may not be evaded. The late Lord Morley thought the race problem in America "insoluble," and so it is, without a religion of brotherhood. Rabindranath Tagore put the matter pointedly when he asked: "Do you really think that so long as America has such racial prejudice it has any Christianity to export?" There is less color feeling, less race rancor, in Russia than in America. If our religion fails here—as, alas, our Protestantism seems well nigh to have failed in America—it fails fundamentally and fatally, no matter how unctuous and eloquent its faith may be. Can our religion once more bring the races of men together in the glow of fellowship, as it did in its morning years?

Putting Our House in Order

As the Russian repudiation of religion may help to renew our faith, so the uprooting of humanity in economic and social affairs may force us to put our own house in order. It is not simply a polemic but a portent, and if it looks at first like the idealism of hell, to ignore it is folly. It does turn the searchlight on features of our own economic system which are ghastly in their injustice and brutal in their exploitation of man by man. It shows, as in a horrible apocalypse, that our selfish, individualistic commercialism, so ready to use men to make money for private gain and luxurious display, instead of using money to make men, is nothing but organized atheism. It is not only unchristian, it is inhuman. Surely we now know that no society has any secure future but that in which the people, all together, learn to cooperate as part of a common life for the common good. Our hope lies in a practical fraternal righteousness, in which the skill of science is employed to serve the masses of mankind. In short, our religion must first do justly, then love mercy, if it is to lead men to walk humbly with God.

III

If these issues have been stated vividly, not to say starkly, it is in order to put a question to your heart and to my own: What have the questions which divide our churches to do with issues such as these? Nothing! Less than nothing! They do not touch the real life of our age; they do not speak to its "condition," as George Fox would say. What wonder that the multi-

tudes melt away, or remain indifferent, when the church is so remote from the problems with which they struggle, and leaves them to grope without guidance? What salvation can the church offer this tangled, turbulent age, speeding its way in a welter of flux and confusion? A private piety, a code of personal ethics, a vision of the kingdom of heaven to be looked at afar, rather than to be looked for? Can Christianity, as a theological and ecclesiastical affair, ever meet the need of this restless, ruthless, cynical modern world, as the gospel of Christ grasped the crumbling classic world and reshaped it?

Joseph Fort Newton

To ask such questions is to answer them to our confounding. In the Garden of Sorrow, on the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus prayed for his disciples, "That they all may be one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me." Here are tremendous words, in which Jesus makes the proof of his person and the power of his gospel to depend upon the unity and fraternity of his followers. Surely he is dead of soul, or else deaf to the voice of Jesus, who can hear that prayer and not be shaken by its pathos and challenge. Read in the light of Christian history, it well nigh smites us mute; read in view of the facts of today, it makes the heart stand still. That prayer is literally true. The world will never believe in Christ until those who love him love one another well enough to live and toil together in the spirit of his life and the service of those for whom he died. If the church can not realize the law of love in its fellowship, it will be impotent if not insignificant in the days that lie ahead, and the faith of Jesus will fulfill itself in other ways, or else be cast aside by a hurrying, realistic world as a vision too fair ever to have been true in the past and too frail ever to be true in the future.

The Crisis of the Church

Is it not the Crisis of Christ in our day? Or, rather, is it not the crisis of his church as it falters, hesitates and delays to prove to the world the truth of the faith and fealty which it professes? Is there no power in the gospel of Christ to cut through the cobwebs of custom and immemorial misunderstanding and let the light shine out of darkness into our hearts, "to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?" For half a thousand years, on this blessed island, the Body of Christ has been torn by a profound schism, the story of which we know, and the tragedy of which has been carried to the far ends of the earth, even in its missionary labors! Let me humbly bear my witness in this White Pulpit which I love, speaking both as a free churchman and as an Anglican, if we must use such words, knowing both sides from the inside and the precious thing which each seeks to conserve. Before God and this company of my brethren, in my own heart they are not divided, but are as the two hemispheres of one Christian world, and what God hath joined together we must not keep asunder! Let us treasure both truths, and reckon them equally holy, equally vital, equally precious; but let us keep in our hearts the words of the Lord Jesus how he said: "Ye do make the will of God of no effect by your traditions!"

Long ago Wesley learned, in his mellow sunset years, that the love of God is deeper than all dogmas, and that the many words of religion describe one ineffable blessing. Today, if we are to do the work of God in our generation, we must take the whole world for our parish, the whole Christ for our redemption, and the whole church for our fellowship. All exclusiveness must be excluded, as it was in the mind of Jesus, who never emphasized a little issue in his life. No partial insight, no limited vision, will meet the need of an age which passes all frontiers and probes all abysses. If we believe—if we really believe—that God is actually present in the fellowship of men who are seeking his kingdom on earth, then the church can be united by the highest and holiest bond—by the Spirit of God himself. If we believe this passionately and profoundly, our inertia, our pride, our historic differences about which we make so much ado, aye, even the institutional selfishness in which all of us have a share, will give way to the holy will of God. Here, again, the personality of Jesus will save us, when we are willing to follow him, lifting us out of our littleness into his largeness, and giving us a vision of the gospel which was the purpose of his mind, the passion of his heart, and the prophecy of his life.

Seeking the Mind of Christ

After the passion of two thousand years, on the eve of the 1900th Day of Pentecost, let us seek the source of light and power, using the old and simple technique: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teach-

ing and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." What if the church should dare such an adventure and assemble, as of old, not to legislate but to listen, invoking the power available to faith and prayer and unity, the better to learn the will of God and how to do his work? What if its leaders should foregather, not to argue, not to patch up a platform, but to seek to know the mind of Christ? What if we should go to such an assembly, not as those who seek for victory of opinion, but actually to yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit to be taught by him what he would have us do? What might not be revealed to us concerning the will of God for our bewildered age, when humanity is astray in its own life, groping its way in the darkness? The early church sought the guidance of God in this manner, and it was permitted it to say what we should be able to say sincerely: "It seemed good to the spirit of God and to us."

The words of Carlyle still flash like lightning in the sky: "The world asks of its church in these times, more passionately than of any other institution, the question —Canst thou teach us or not?" If the old hurt and heartache of the world is to be healed, if there is to be love where now there is hate; if bitter racial rancors are to be cleansed away, if the shadow of war is to be lifted from the life of man, setting us free to create a world fellowship; if the race is to be led toward a juster, wiser, more merciful social order, and the light of the gospel sent into all the dark corners of the earth; it will be by the union of those who have found in Jesus the way, the truth, and the life—by a pentecost of love and a baptism of brotherhood. Nothing can save the church and make it equal to the tragic necessities of our age except the power of him who created it —nothing but the red passion of the love of God and the white fire of his Spirit in our hearts.

Religion as Refuge—and as Challenge

By Charles W. Gilkey

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Psalm 61:2.

TO anyone who has ever roughed it through Palestine in early March, a sentence like this brings back vivid memories. We of the west think of the desert as a home of heat. But the Arabs call the high plateaus of Hauran, northeast of the Sea of Galilee, "the home of the cold." And those of us who have ridden on horseback across those wind-swept plateaus, hour after hour and even day after day in the teeth of a driving northeast rain, until, chilled and weary, we seized a few moments' welcome respite in the lee of a great rock, where the sudden quiet from the piercing wind and the secure shelter from the slanting rain live yet in our grateful memories, can sense something of what must have been in the mind and heart of this poet of long ago. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Or if, later in the advancing season, one has ever sought protection from the blazing sun, and the hot blasts and stinging sand that burst from the furnace-door of the desert when it is really the home of the heat; and has found that shelter at last in the only shade on earth that is at once solid and moist and cool —what Isaiah calls "the shade of a great rock in a weary land"—then one understands why the prophet used this picture to describe what the friendship of a great and good man is like. "And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest . . . as the shade of a great rock in a weary land." Still plainer is it why the Psalmist used this same picture to describe his longing for the presence and the protection of God. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

A Rock "Too High for Me"

But just as memories like these seemed to lead to the conclusion that the main point of this text is religion's promise of secure shelter from the storm and heat of life, one's eye falls on the marginal rendering of this same familiar verse—and at once a very different picture rises before the mind's eye. "Lead me to a rock that is too high for me." The setting is no longer that of a driving storm or a burning sun, from which the unlucky traveler seeks shelter behind and beneath a great rock. The rock has become now a commanding summit which the exploring traveler is eager to climb. He wants the wider, farther view from its highest point, and he finds in its steep slopes a challenge to adventure and conquest. The rock calls out his utmost powers of exertion and endurance. If he cannot surmount it at his first attempt, he returns to seek some other path to the summit, or he develops his energies and endurance by discipline and training, till they are equal to the difficult ascent. And if the rock proves too high and hard for him to scale in his lifetime, or even for his children in theirs, it will stand there down the generations as an age-long challenge and incentive, until it also is at last surmounted. How many of the noblest vistas in human history, and the highest ranges of human capacity, come into view on the spiritual horizon when we see some steep rock rising sheer beyond us, and find at its foot a succession of courageous climbers saying, "Lead me to a rock that is too high for me."

Now the best way to understand a great utterance of religious experience like this may not be to turn the sermon into a learned piece of research, examining the linguistic grounds and approaches with an etymological microscope and a critical hammer in order to decide which of the two translations is the more accurate rendering of the Hebrew original. That may or may not prove interesting, and it may or may not prove important. The very ambiguity of the text may be significant. Certainly it reminds us of the two-sided aspect of great rocks in relation to our human experience. They are both a refuge from storm and heat, and a challenge to achievement. They shelter and they stimu-

late. And in this double and almost paradoxical function, they give us a true picture of the double and even more paradoxical provision of religion for human need.

Two Poles of Religion

In this vivid picture and swift insight of the ancient Hebrew poet, there is anticipated the result of some of our best modern thinking about religion; but it is given to us, not as the result of abstract analysis or philosophic thought, but in a symbol of concrete and personal experience. Religion is at one of its poles the search for and the discovery of an assurance about man's place in the universe which gives him shelter and peace among the vicissitudes of life, and keeps him from being overwhelmed by the storms that beat upon him. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." But at the other pole, religion is likewise the courageous and creative faith that urges man on and up to the scaling of heights that had hitherto seemed impossible; and when these at last have been attained, urges him still further on to higher and harder summits that then for the first time appear beyond. When we modern folk analyze this second pole of religion as "the pursuit of a flying goal," and say that "man's reach exceeds his grasp," we are putting into other figures of speech the insight and impulse that led the Psalmist to cry out in answer to religion's challenge, "Lead me to a rock that is too high for me."

The same deep insight into the two-sidedness or "polarity" of religion in the profounder experience of men in every generation, appears in Professor Reinhold Niebuhr's discerning remark, in "Does Civilization Need Religion," that man finds himself at once a child and a rebel in his world. The order of nature which his science studies has produced him and sustains him as apparently its highest product: but on the other

A Pastoral Prayer

By Bishop Paul Jones*

O GOD, our heavenly Father, who art light and life and love, shine upon our lives, strengthen us by contact with Thee and draw us into a deeper harmony with all of life about us. We are conscious of the weakness and ineffectiveness of our lives —the occasional glimpses of truth and beauty that come to us reveal our poverty of spirit, and we long for a deeper understanding of life and the power to use to the utmost such capacity as has been given us. Reveal Thyself to us in this hour that we may go forth strengthened and refreshed, more nearly equal to the tasks of the day.

But it is not only for ourselves that we pray. The greatness of our need reminds us how imperfectly our world has been brought into harmony with Thy will. We rejoice at the order and beauty around us in the world of nature, the flowers and streams and mountains; we respond in appreciation to those works of man when, in his buildings and his institutions he has caught something of the divine note, and we greet the forms of strength and character revealed in men and women. But we know, too, the broken relationships in homes and in the community, the bitter struggles in the industrial world, the clash between races and the jealous rivalries of nations.

We would know more of the power of love to restore broken ties, transform antagonism and heal the wounds of life; we need a deeper knowledge of ourselves and the world about us, and a greater patience and courage to go on adventuring in the paths of sympathetic understanding, that we may be fellow workers with Thee in the creative work of building Thy kingdom. When we pray for peace, help us to know what we are asking for, and to realize that it may come to us only through the uprooting of our favorite prejudices, our most comfortable habits and our cherished opinions, in order that, stripped and humbled, we may fit into Thy world and become part of Thy kingdom, with our lives knit into those of our fellows and our aims and purposes attuned to those which will give the largest light and life and hope to all.

When failure and disappointment have numbed our energies, recall to us the noble lives of those who in every age have thought not of their own gain but have given themselves unsparingly to the life of the world. Save us from pride of opinion and cheap sophistication, that we may never lose our sense of awe and wonder in the presence of a growing world far greater than we can understand. Still more we feel the danger of viewing men cheaply and losing our faith in the capacity of each one of Thy children for noble and generous life. Save us from that blasphemy by revealing to us the riches of character that lie hidden under the unpromising exteriors of our associates; and grant us so to live that we may ever call forth the best in others, so that together we may rise to new levels of service.

And when we think in large terms of the great problems of the world, may we never forget that no problem is so large but what its solution is made up of the sum of the efforts made by countless millions; that Thy kingdom comes not by some great cataclysm, but as men and women enter into it day after day, living in terms of that way of life revealed most clearly in the words and life of Jesus Christ. In grateful recognition of his inspiration and in the assurance of his constant assistance, we commit our aspirations and our lives to Thee. Amen.

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PACIFIC SCHOOL

hand, his own emerging capacities and mounting standards of value will not let him rest satisfied with the order of nature as he finds it, but impel him to transform and even to transcend it. And vital religion deepens this duality and heightens this tension in his experience, by bidding him live in the world as a child in his Father's house, where he can be assured of "shelter in the time of storm"; and yet also as an irreconcilable rebel against things as they are, working and praying that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. Hence the inevitable tension in all profound and vital religion, and notably in historic Christianity, never fully reconciled and relaxed only when its energies are reduced, between this-worldliness and other-worldliness, between the kingdom of God as a present fact and as a future expectation.

Challenging Goals

Religion is by no means the only area of human experience in which such paradoxical polarities appear. Dean Sperry, in his book on "Reality in Worship," has called our attention to a similar antithesis in the experience of George Mallory with Mount Everest. When he was telling his American audiences in 1922 why he had already participated in two attempts to climb the highest mountain in the world, and was about to undertake a third, he used words strikingly reminiscent of the marginal reading of this text: "If you cannot understand that there is something in man which responds to the challenge of this mountain and goes out to meet it, that the struggle is the struggle of life itself upward and forever upward, then you won't see why we go." "Lead me to the rock that is too high for me." And yet the same man who felt so strongly the challenge of the mountain, had a deep sense of its daunting and awesome aspect, and said just before the last ascent, on which he lost his life within 600 feet of the summit, "We expect no mercy from Everest." If the highest of the Himalayas could thus call forth in the same heroic soul, now an ambition that stimulated him, and again an awe that humbled him, need we be surprised that religion discovers the same paradox in the presence of the Eternal?

A similar duality lies close to the heart of another human experience that is fortunately far more familiar, and at its best even more profound. Every true lover knows what shelter and security there is in the companionship and affection of his beloved. There, more surely and far more warmly than in the lee of any rock, he can take refuge no matter how severe the storm without, and find an understanding and a love that become to him a manifestation and assurance of the very love of God himself. And yet every true lover knows also, not only the soul-stirring resolve to show himself worthy of such love, but also the realization that no matter how hard he try, he can never fully earn or deserve it—indeed, that in a sense which only lovers know, his beloved is forever "beyond him." Coventry Patmore has expressed this paradox in words which many a "married lover" besides himself understands, and which strikingly recall the very imagery of the text:

> Why, having won her, do I woo? . . . .
> Because her gay and lofty brows,
> When all is won which hope can ask,
> Reflect a light of hopeless snows
> That bright in virgin ether bask;
> Because, though free of the outer court
> I am, this Temple keeps its shrine
> Sacred to Heaven; because, in short,
> She's not and never can be mine.

The failure to understand and reckon with the fact of such paradoxical polarities is one cause of the inade-

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quacy of some popular and plausible modern theories which overconfidently assume to explain these experiences—and sometimes, in the case of religion, to explain them away. It is of course true that one or the other pole of these antitheses is at any given moment in the foreground of our consciousness, and therefore dominant in our actions, just as a swinging pendulum is for the moment on one side or other of a median line. But as the movement and present position of that pendulum, even when it is swinging upward, are only to be understood, and its future direction only to be anticipated, in relation to forces that act on it, so to speak, from the other side; so the nature and value of religious experience are never exhausted by the elements that may for the moment seem to be uppermost in them.

"I Press on"

We are often told these days, for instance, that pious people are weak souls who are always seeking shelter from the storms of life, and finding compensation for its stern realities, either in a vivid inner world of their

own projection, or in hope of a happier world to come. Such an explanation moves almost exclusively within one area of religious experience, and forgets another area not less characteristic. It overlooks the tremendous energies for action which religion releases in and through men: the ancient Hebrew warrior shouting "By thee I run upon a troop; and by my God do I leap over a wall"; and upon far loftier spiritual levels, Paul singing as he climbs higher yet, "Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before, I press on. . . . ."

And when on the other hand we are told these days, with equal assurance and similar one-sidedness, that religion is simply man's own personal and social idealism, unsupported by an indifferent universe, urging him onward and upward, at dusk as well as dawn, until all too soon—

> the little strength is spent
> And little hope burns low . . . .

we do well to remember likewise that ancient discernment of religious aspiration, made most clearly when toward sunset the clouds lift at last from the distant heights toward which he climbs, while he himself seeks rest and shelter for yet another night: "The highest peace comes to men when their life is centered not in what is best in them but in that beyond them which is better than their best."

This double provision of religion, affording stimulus for the day and then shelter for the night, carries with it consequences that are even more important for our living than for our thinking—just because life has to be lived before it can be understood. It has profound and immediate consequences for our *faith in God*. It is plain that both these elements were conspicuous in Jesus' faith in God—without ever being reconciled in any logical or theological definition or argument. These he apparently avoided, being content to live with and for God, and finding such life so rich and dependable that he needed no further proof. God was to him the Father out of whose strong hand neither life nor death can pluck his children. There was security now and forever. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." But God was also for Jesus the Incomparable Goodness: beside whom no man dare call himself good; yet whose goodness is the pattern and standard for us all. "Lead me to the rock that is too high for me." The challenge of the text rings even clearer from that supreme paradox of reverent humility and yet of limitless aspiration in the presence of God, that made Jesus say with utter sincerity: "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, that is, God"—and yet again, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Toward a Deeper Security

Christian thought of God and faith in God, which in Jesus swung thus from the assurance of personal security on the one hand to the sense of moral obligation on the other, has down the centuries since been always a moving pendulum, swinging in recurrent oscillation between points marked by the theological thinking, the social experience, or the religious needs of the time. The immanence and the transcendence of God, his likeness to or otherness from our human nature, the rational and the mysterious aspects of his presence in the world, and now in our own time the ethical and the cosmic elements in our conception of him, have been such theological poles, between which religious experience and thought have swung in perpetual motion and tension. And meanwhile religious men and women, whose needs have been personal and vital rather than theological, have worked their own way toward a stronger faith in God, now in a quest for deeper security and then again in response to a social or moral challenge which they had to meet—like a sailing ship beating its way forward by tacking against the wind. So religion discovers forces that are available for quickening its own progress in situations that had looked contrary, and finds in God's will the source not only of its peace but of its power.

This double provision of religion has consequences no less important for the Christian *view of the world*. President Hyde of Bowdoin, in a little summary of "Jesus' Way" that has been of the greatest help to many perplexed people, wrote that a Christian is one who "lives in the world at his Father's house, sharing with his brothers the good things it contains." Such joy and trustful acceptance of this world as God's world is one of religion's authentic notes, calling us to secure shelter from the storms of inner loneliness and despair that would otherwise sweep down upon our spirits. But it is by no means the only note of religion. Though this world be God's world, it is not yet fully his, nor is his will yet by any means fully done here. The house he has given us must be enlarged and transformed to fulfill his emerging purposes. The editor of "The House Beautiful" maintained in a striking editorial last summer that an old house reconstructed and improved has qualities of atmosphere and homelikeness that no new house can ever secure. So religion bids us rebuild and enlarge, not only the world and the social order of which we are a part, but our own lot in life, our own calling, our very temperament and character. Every evening God welcomes his children home to the secure shelter of a trustful faith: every morning he sends them forth to the challenging tasks of a creative and transforming faith.

Immortality

And finally, this double provision of religion bears directly on the Christian *hope of immortality*. That faith is indeed a shelter at the last. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." But it is much more than a piteous cry for shelter from the storms of a pitiless universe. One of the south side districts of Chicago has been successively represented in the state legislature by two gifted and public-spirited women, who have actually set standards for the participation of women in our political life that have measured up to the highest hopes which were so widely cherished a decade ago. Both of them died in office—all too soon. At a public memorial service for Mrs. H. W. Cheney, held in the University of Chicago chapel, Lorado Taft, the eminent sculptor, speaking for her neighbors, paid her a

tribute that will not soon be forgotten. Most people, he said, depressed and weakened his own faith in immortality. But there had been a few whom he had known, Mrs. Cheney and her predecessor Mrs. Goode among them, who had expanded and reinforced that faith. They planned and lived life on such a scale, made such demands on it, and cherished such great expectations beyond even the achievements that had been theirs, that he for one found his own faith in immortality renewed and enlarged as they went on before us into the Unseen. They too, he dared to believe, "asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it."

"Lead me to the rock that is too high for me."

The Human Side of Pentecost

By Arthur W. Stalker

I am come that ye may have life—to the full. John 10:11 (*Moffatt*).

Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you. Acts 1:8.

I AM, perhaps to your surprise, coupling together these two declarations of Jesus. The first, which indicates what every man wants in his own way, "life to the full," has the aspect of an indefinite or at least a more distant fulfillment. We detect no sense of immediacy about it. As though Jesus had said: "I have come for this purpose. You may have it whenever you want it. I have it. You may have it too." The second scripture has the prospect of fulfillment nearly at hand. In just a few days the men to whom Jesus was at that time speaking were to have "life to the full." For this promise was that they should very soon receive power, and in the common thought of men that is the equivalent of life to the full. Every normal man has a longing for power. He identifies power and life. Life without power is not real life.

We are not to forget that these two utterances of Jesus are found in different books of the New Testament, one of them in the Gospels and the other in the Acts. The atmosphere about these books seems different. In the one the disciples seem like folks living by some sheltered inland lake; in the other they are out among the perils of the open sea. In the first they present a perverse dullness that at no time seemed to hear a call, to recognize a challenge that was distinctly for them; in the second they were keen, always on edge to represent their tireless leader, and their efforts are plainly seen in early and vigorous activity. In the Gospels Jesus is always at the front, meeting criticism, bearing the brunt of things, carrying the entire responsibility; in the Acts those quiet and inoffensive disciples were constantly and with apparently disciplined courage facing hardships, persecution and death.

The change in those men is interesting in a high degree. Peter, James and John in the Acts hardly look at all like the pictures we have of them in the Gospels. Photographs of them might seem identical, but no artist who has studied the backgrounds of life and springs of motive would paint the same faces on canvas. What made the change? It was positive, thorough-going and vastly effective, indeed so much so that it has seemed to multitudes necessary to postulate a miracle. The humble discipline had suddenly become transformed into "the glorious company of the apostles."

What Changed the Disciples?

It would seem that the universal church has lifted the finger and pointed to Pentecost as the entire explanation. To those who follow such a course of interpretation that divine invasion of human personality expresses itself in unexplainable magic rather than in the ordinary, regular and rational processes of life. If that interpretation is true, our task in this 1900th anniversary would seem to be simply to reproduce the original conditions, and, presto! another Pentecost! It is not an inconsiderable number who today so think and feel. One needs but little learning to see that an easy explanation of that kind saves us from the hardship of thinking. The real trouble with the easy interpretation, however, is that it is not likely to be right. It seems devout and Christian to honor God in accenting the divine transcendence; but even that must not be stressed to the weakening of our sense of God's dear presence in the ways and methods of human nature.

In the bright blaze of an apparent miracle men's eyes are naturally withdrawn from other factors that might have had no small share in the historic event. We seem naturally always ready to recognize the divine in the unusual, God in what appears humanly impossible. But in Pentecost other elements than those we name divine were actually present and cooperative, and it is high time they were properly appraised. In the old days transatlantic vessels used their own power for their voyages and often hoisted sail to catch power from without. It goes without saying that while these cooperating forces might have seemed independent they were gladly accepted in their practical union. Inevitably that which is from outside, from above, rests in a mystery that is beyond us. We know not whence it cometh or whither it goeth. We stand with bowed heads before God and his ways.

Fifty Fruitful Days

But there was something besides God at Pentecost. This poor human, this great human that we know so well was there also in those weak, ignorant and unstable men of the Gospels. How could we have neglected so long to study and estimate the possibilities of change and progress in human nature during fifty extraordinary days! Have you ever discovered what may transpire within the soul during the passing of a second of time? Let me tell you some things. They are: new and rich insights, new valuations, new and noble visions of life's tomorrow. And any one of these may be worth to life whole years that have been spent

ithout them! If all that may transpire in a moment f time, why have we left those fifty long days with-ut giving the most earnest thought to their place nd meaning in the re-shaping of the characters of the isciples. Those days must have been tinged alike with ne gloom and despair of Calvary as they were touched ith the glow and hope of Easter.

I know that Luke has passed these days by with only ne comment that they gathered daily in the upper

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oom, that they prayed for the coming of the Holy pirit, and waited. The historian does not, because of anty records, omit from his narrative the story of nknown but exceedingly fruitful years; rather he ies the more earnestly to discover the hidden forces at have been approximately sufficient to account for ne conspicuous occurrences that suddenly startled the orld. You and I must do that selfsame thing in order appreciate what in those fifty days God was doing the lives of those early disciples.

This may necessitate a fuller picture of what actually appened than Luke has painted for us and you may harge me with painting from my own imagination; ut, after all, is not that what God has given us our nagination for? It has always been its business to sualize the unrecorded past, the unseen present and e unknown future. And, frankly, does it not seem nthinkable that earnest and sturdy men who had met ith unparalleled experiences could gather daily in an per room for nearly two months and do nothing but ay for a power they did not understand, and wait? hey had memories. Did they not use them? They d minds. Did they not try to understand the past? hey had imaginations. Did they not try to find and sualize the truth?

We must make up our minds to one of two things. Pentecost was either magic or it was along lines we can trace. As we remember Jesus are we not sure that this is what he wanted: Not the same men waiting and praying patiently, but the same men transformed by memory and emotion and thought and prayer so they might be ready for the blessing of power.

If human nature is variable, it is also true that it is dependable. Those disciples long ago proved to us that they were full of human nature. Then we may be sure of three things happening in that period of fifty days. First, in their daily meetings in that upper room in Jerusalem those former comrades of Jesus must have spent many hours recalling with vividness the months just passed with their deathless messages of personality, word and deed. We are sure they did a second thing: as true men they struggled to understand Jesus—no small task. Third, and as a consummation they pledged him a perfect loyalty. By the end of the fifty days so much was clear to them about Jesus, his message and his mission that they were on tiptoe to go. The Pentecostal signal would not have meant a blessing for mankind, had the leaders of the new movement not undergone an almost entire transformation in those days of so-called waiting.

Regret and Grief

Let us look for a moment at the fruits brought into their lives by their review of those sad but wonderful years. I venture to say that in that room regret and grief again and again pre-empted the place of prayer in the disturbed hearts of that devoted group. They must have been bitterly conscious that they had proved unworthy of that precious relationship. In those short swift years just gone, how persistent had been their misunderstandings and mistakes! They had been consistently short-sighted, unappreciative of the deepest, richest truth in Jesus and all but blind to his moral beauty and glory. Only since Easter had the full truth been slowly dawning on their minds. As never before, they became conscious how in the presence of that continuous and unrestrained giving of himself for them their own selfishness had been unpardonable. Almost while he was dying, at least on the very threshold of Calvary, they had been quarreling among themselves for places of honor in his kingdom. To them now, in the quiet of that upper room, such conduct must have seemed like acted blasphemy. It cannot be doubted that poignant regret played a large part in creating the permanent mood to which the disciples at last came. The personal and moral problems connected with dereliction like theirs could not be solved as we sometimes solve ours by saying: "Let bygones be bygones." Why, even before the sweet and gracious glory of Easter with its interpretive power, when Jesus was in the heavy shadow of failure, Peter who had denied him went out where he could be alone and wept bitterly. Judas knew Jesus no better, but repentance mounted to a tidal wave within his heart and he cast his life into the darkness. Indeed, the ordinary procedure of human nature would give us full warrant for believing that these days of memory were also days of

strong emotion, that love and grief, hope and regret, anguish and high resolve exchanged places at the forefront of the soul. Eventually a firm determination to repay the Christ in love and service took precedence over all else. It is not so that the knowledge that we have misunderstood and wronged those who love us creates a kind of measureless obligation?

And has all that I have said no lesson for us, his followers and representatives today? Would not a careful view of our own attitudes demand of us some such relation of regret coupled with devotion?

Understanding Jesus

Of course, all this implies that second element in this reconstructed picture: that group of serious men whose lives and fortunes were involved in the nature and purposes of Jesus had at last come to their own satisfactory understanding of him. The problem of the hero being unrecognized by his valet is a thousand fold intensified in the relationship sustained by these twelve ordinary men. You remember how Matthew Arnold charged that they were not capable of reporting Jesus. Their frankness and sincerity alone saved them. Nothing is easier than to criticize them for their lack of insight into that personality which to them was full of contradictions. Jesus did violence to every Jew's conception of the Messiah. The contrasts within his nature and in his experience could not be embraced by any contemporary idea of the divine. Divine, yet without a place where he might lay his head, holy yet suffering, mighty yet overpowered by men! They could not synthesize that and the still longer list. The comparatively simple synoptic record pictures them at their mental worst in their failures to appreciate him, his words and his purpose. But they were no worse than the wisest of their time. Our friend Peter once hazarded a bold guess which did not express much more than a momentary impulse, as events proved. The task of understanding Jesus was not achieved by any of his contemporaries. He was beyond them all. Saul, stopped at the Damascus gate and called into the apostleship, required three years in Arabia to make Jesus and his mission so understandable and reasonable that he could commit his life to an enterprise that he had sought to destroy. The twelve are not to be frowned upon for their ignorance of Jesus. It was not until the Council of Nicaea, in 325 A. D., that what seemed to be an all inclusive, mathematically exact, metaphysically complete, definition of Jesus was given. In that he was included within hard and fast lines, the divine and the human being delicately separated. "Very God of Very God and Very Man of Very Man." This century of ours is wiser. It refuses to recognize those lines and grants him to stand out before the world in his immeasurable truth, love and power.

Searching of Heart

Many seem to be thinking and acting as though the fate of Pentecost hung by the slender thread of folk being "of one accord in one place" while they prayed. Rather, friends, many days that are creative of heart searching and deep thinking may be equally necessary. They may even be more necessary toward the preparation of the human element in Pentecost. Certainly the time element was exceedingly important in the formation of the disciples' clearer and fuller ideas of Jesus. For when you recall their insistent political expectations up to the very threshold of Calvary, it is perfectly evident that in those fifty days they had traveled far toward the truth. For, shortly they were willing to die for him without the anticipation of a little throne from which they might rule other folks, and soon their persecutors could tell by their ideals and lives "that they had been with Jesus." A recent story credits Lincoln with a fine answer to his wife's complaint that their home life suffered because he was giving so much time to politicians and office seekers. He hesitated a moment and then remarked slowly: "I see that time is required for appreciation and love." It is a great truth, whoever spoke it. We can see, then, how this interval of thoughtfulness between Easter and Pentecost gave to the disciples time for a whole-souled and true attitude toward Jesus and for evolving a working conception of him which controls the thoughts of multitudes today.

And are we not now ready to incorporate the third fact in our picture, the fact for which Luke had a place on his small canvas: The disciples prayed. They had been instructed to pray for power. But what notions they had had of power! Such ideas of power as they had previously entertained, if re-enforced by the fact of power, would have made the Acts a story of aggressive selfishness had the story ever been written. Innocent the III prayed. Then he arose from his knees and made quick haste to his majestic throne, from which he sought with increased passion to rule the temporal and spiritual powers of the world. Francis of Assisi prayed. When he stood upon his feet he purposed to resign his wealth, to refuse the privileges of his station and in Jesus' name to serve the poorest of the poor. The answer to prayer means different things to different men. The divine blessing does not guarantee correct attitudes, right thinking and uniformly helpful relationships. It was well for the world that the disciples were weak when their major ideas and emotions were wrong. When they had reached great and worthy conceptions of Jesus and had determined to make reparation for the wrongs they had done him, they coveted, prayed for, the power that would enable them to fulfill their Lord's high purposes.

Genuine Repentance

Quite likely, you see, their hearts were warm through a repentance that was real and an adoration that was genuine but they were not yet aflame. Had they started out depending upon themselves, they might have gone far. Their convictions were strong. But they craved the divine cooperation, a oneness with God that would entirely fit them, not now for a throne but for a sacrificial road with the kingdom of God at the far end and on the way along. Their long meditation had brought them the truth, and the eagerness of their desire was bringing them nearer to the passion of God. The human agency to which heaven always entrusts so

much was as nearly as possible ready for the blessing of power.

"Ye shall receive power," was the well remembered promise. They could not forget it. And no more can we. But it was not long before the disciples learned that the power of God is the power of love, of patience, of courage, of loyalty, the power to suffer, to die. To them the marvel that belonged to Pentecost was not the regular order of God. That large and spectacular display, associated with never-to-be-repeated conditions, did not furnish to them a type and pattern of the great Christian conquest of the world. "Christ crucified" became to them the power of God.

Just a sketch from Bulwer-Lytton's, "Last Days of Pompeii." Apæcides, man of culture and influence, was walking down the street immersed in thought. What interests were engaging his attention, what scholarly problems he was trying to solve, we do not know. But we do know that Olinthus, the Nazarene, saw him and without question but with courtesy joined him for a while in his walk. He leans toward him and pours his very heart into the soul of Apæcides. What is he saying? He is just telling him with warmth and conviction the simple story of Jesus, his life, his death, Easter morn and the glory these mean to the race. It was a little Pentecost, but in that way the empire was won.

What Is Truth?

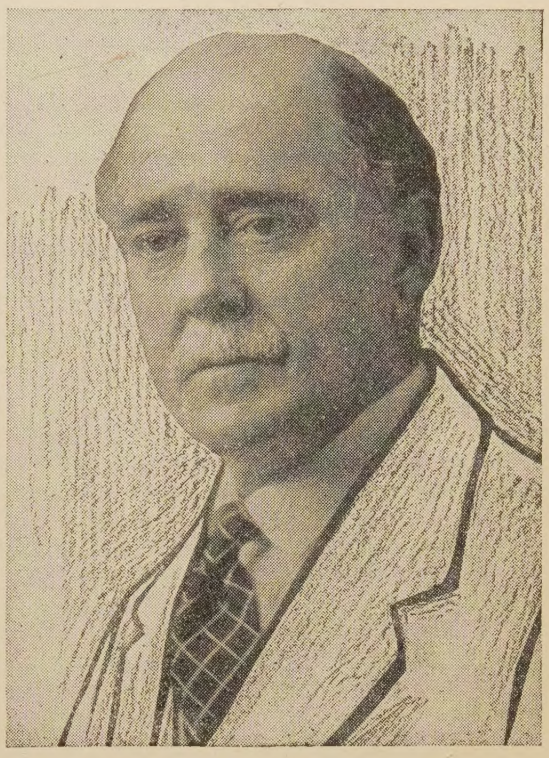
By George Lawrence Parker

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? John 18:38.

ONE of the famous silences of history is that of Jesus when he gave no answer to Pilate's question, "What is Truth?" Lord Bacon enshrines the silence in our memories still further when he writes the incident down thus, "What is Truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer." Now, there are two errors in Lord Bacon's interpretation; one, it seems to me, a real error; the other, not so much of an error as it appears to be on the surface. The real error is that Pilate would not stay for an answer. Bacon makes him turn at once and go out from Jesus to the crowd, as if Pilate almost flung the question over his shoulder with a satiric smile, feeling sure he had caught Jesus in a trap.

But the real reading of the incident shows another picture. The plain fact is, Jesus had no answer. He forced Pilate to go out unanswered. We have all had this same experience. We have asked some question only to be answered by our friend or disputant with a look that spoke more than words could ever speak. The folly of our question became apparent to us at once; we lowered our eyes and went out, not because we would not "wait for an answer," but because we had our answer in that look. We then became conscious that our question was based on falsehood, insincerity, or on knowledge we already possessed. We then knew we could have answered it ourselves, and our smitten conscience told us we need never have asked the question.

It is a bitter experience, this of asking a perfectly plain question whose answer we already know, and receiving in reply a look that pierces to the very soul of our pretense and cowardice. And this was the experience of Pilate. He got his answer in a look that left him no defense but to run away from its burning heat. It is not true that he would not "stay for an answer." The truth is that Jesus' unspoken answer lashed him out of his presence; and so complete was the answer that he immediately said to the crowd, "I find no fault in this man." So great was the fault revealed in himself by that look of Jesus that it overpowered Pilate and he saw Jesus as faultless.



George Lawrence Parker

The Wisdom of Jesus

It is always so in real experience. Whoever reveals our inward folly or insincerity to us, and does it not by scathing words, but just by a look, immediately commands our whole inner being. Such a one controls us, becomes faultless in our eyes. For without holding us up to the scorn or ridicule of men, he has dealt with us in our innermost secret soul. He has really said: "Your question comes from a wrong attitude toward truth, and I will show you in a look how greatly you injure your own most secret and precious self. Let no others enter here; keep them out; get this matter straight just between yourself and truth and God. By simply looking at you with sincere eyes, I will show

you how insincere you are, but I will not expose you to other men." That was the wisdom of Jesus! And Pilate went out not because he was in a hurry but because he was fully answered. And with that sincerity of Jesus flooding his own insincerity, he said, "This is a faultless man." What a picture! What a study in vital psychology!

But the incident leads us still further. We ask, Did Jesus really have no verbal reply to such a question? Yes, he had an answer but he had none for Pilate! That is the tragedy of the whole thing. It is possible to miss truth not because truth will not explain itself, but because we are what we are, and for us there is no answer. For others a clear, shining answer; for us, none. That's the tragedy! Jesus preceded his silent look with exactly this preface: "He that is of the truth heareth my voice." That is the whole story—"For you, Pilate, there is no truth simply because you are not true yourself. To get truth, you must be true. Unless there be truth in you, the universe nor God himself can answer your question, 'What is truth?' "

In other words, truth is a reciprocal attitude between us and the universe. It is not a statement, nor a declaration, nor a proof, nor a dogma, nor a commandment, nor a proposition that is forever closed, signed, sealed and delivered. Truth is the intelligent speech, cooperation, and communication between two forces sincerely trying to understand each other. Truth is the sincerity of the soul seeking and securing, in its own degree, the reply given by a sincere universe. If the bond of sincerity is broken, truth becomes an impossible commodity; it simply does not exist in an insincere atmosphere, any more than a fish can live out of water.

Sincerity a Large Factor

On this sincerity of communication, intelligence depends. There is a great deal of truth in the world which is unintelligible to me because I have not sincerely sought it. I may rely upon the truth of higher mathematics; my life may be controlled by that truth; but as an asset of my own life, it is almost non-existent because it has never commanded my sincere search. A child of eight has all the truth that a child of eight ought to have, but much truth is yet outside of his range because it can as yet not speak intelligently to him. If he is enabled to keep the bond of sincerity, greater and greater truth will speak to him; losing that bond, much of his life will remain at the eight-year-old level.

In the realm of personal life, truth is unlimited so long as the sincere attitude keeps open the ear to which the universe can speak its truth. Here was Pilate's huge mistake. He asked a question that had no way to get its answer to him. He turned his back to the quarter from which alone the answer could come. He asked that a golden ball of truth be thrown to him, but his hands were stretched in the opposite direction.

This is the tragedy of all souls who persistently cry, "Give me the truth," and yet refuse to let truth control their attitude and gestures and conduct. Truth is not a one hundred per cent thing that the universe hands over to me. Truth is a fifty per cent attitude on my part standing ready to receive the fifty per cent to be added by the universe. To the soul that persistently cries, "Give me the truth," God has but one reply, "You have your part of the truth; when you are ready to use it my part of the truth stands ready to complete your part; but until you are thus ready, I have no truth for you."

Such a simple matter! Such a perfectly flawless process! Truth in humble guise stoops at every door and says, "I am the other part of your truth. I am nothing without you." Here the wise and simple are on the same basis, and lovely glorious truth becomes the universal right of every soul. Oh, simple truth! Oh, revealer of the great tragedy! The tragedy that we fail to cooperate with the very thing we cry out for!

Here is the democracy of truth. It is not a possessing, but a sharing. Until truth is shared, it is not true. I cannot believe any statement, really, unless in some way there is a sharing between it and me. I cannot conceive of stars until I see them. I cannot conceive of love until I feel it. I cannot know anything of God until my life reaches out from its own experience to him and his experience.

"Jesting Pilate"

And this brings us to Lord Bacon's second error—namely, he called him "Jesting Pilate." But I have out-argued myself. Is Lord Bacon so wrong, after all? Is not the Pilate attitude a grim jest, after all? Is it not a tragic joke that men play upon themselves, when they ask for truth yet will not use the truth in themselves? Are we not jesters, indeed, making mimickry out of our most serious need when we ask for truth and turn our backs; as if a man should pray for a favorable wind and deliberately set his sail against it! It is a jest after all, and Bacon not so far wrong. For we make a laughable figure of ourselves and our destiny when we cry to the empty spaces to give us something that is already in our hands.

Today we are discussing truth as never before. We say that much old truth has disappeared. We say that we have no sure guides to truth. Old proofs, old sureties, all gone! "What is truth?" And all the while Jesus gives us a silent look as if to say, "You are but jesting. If you really wanted truth, you would find it right there within yourself, and what you have you would bring up against the very face of God; and he would complete it for you, not by giving you proof, but by sharing with you his larger part of the same truth. But bringing no truth of your own, no truth in yourself, no sincere communication, God has no answer for you. His truth depends on your being true."

Yes, jesting Pilate would "not wait for an answer," for one look from the face of a true man confounded him, and he had his answer! He knew the truth at last, the truth that his insincerity made truth impossible. In the flood of light that came on him, he was overpowered and uttered one great corollary truth, "This man is irresistible. I find no fault in him." For truth that at last shows us who we are is the final truth.

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

WE CHRISTIANS of the west but dimly realize the stake which Christianity has in the momentous events transpiring in India. Gandhi and his followers have dramatized on a vast scale the essential spiritual conflict precipitated by a Galilean teacher many years ago when he stood before Pilate. That obscure event, which has been lifted out of its obscurity and become the most widely known and most vivid contest of moral forces in history, was more than a personal drama. It was a conflict of two worlds—the world of secular power and the world of spiritual power. My kingdom is not of your world, calmly declared the Prisoner. He had many times before tried to impart this same truth to his undiscerning disciples. Today, Gandhi, in a spirit as nearly approaching that of Jesus as any avowed disciple of Jesus ever exhibited, has challenged the same secular system which put Jesus to death. He rejects all carnal weapons. His reliance is upon what he calls "soul force." He believes that resort to physical force would, even in its success, breed evils greater than those it might cure. Gandhi does not call himself a Christian, but he has sat at the feet of our Master and learned of him. It is Christianity itself that is at stake in the Indian crisis. There for the first time in history the essential principle of Christianity is being put to the test in a vast political revolution designed to overthrow a secular system of injustice. Christians may well watch each day's news with spiritual anxiety and take the cause of Gandhi even to our Christian altars, beseeching God's blessing upon it.

The Book of the Month

AN EMERGING CHRISTIAN FAITH, *by Justin Wroe Nixon. Harper & Brothers.* $2.50.

HERE IS A BOOK which deals with the deep things of Christian faith and experience, in which the author seems to be personally present with the reader and simply talking to him. Behind every formulation of Christian truth there is set a background of some personal experience in which Dr. Nixon himself came so to conceive the truth. He began his Christian life under the older forms of faith, and moved forward with the main stream of contemporary thought, through the eddys and counter-currents of doubt and confusion, into the light of a sure and potent conviction. We thus have an interpretation of the general mind of our time as it has registered itself in the personal experience of a particular individual. His life-time covers the period in which occurred what he characterizes as "the break-up of a great tradition." This break-up he not only looked upon but experienced. As a scholar, Dr. Nixon is primarily a sociologist, but the kind of sociologist who stands upon the top of a hill and surveys with a philosopher's eye the whole human scene, rather than one who merely explores an obscure valley. Our scientific confusion, our machine culture, our capitalistic, profit-motived economic order—these all come up before him as he seeks to apply "the persistent intuitions of Christianity" to the world as it really is. You can open the book anywhere, and on any page find a truth so lucid and so winsomely phrased that it sets your own mind alight.

A Thought for the Month

MODERN MAN likes to think of himself as master of the world. "Behold great Babylon that I have builded," was the expression of a king with a bloated ego, but the same words express the general mood of our time as we contemplate our civilization with its manifold evidences of human genius and skill. Such braggadocio is our deepest moral peril. This kind of humanism is the direct antithesis of religion. For religion is a confession of man's inadequacy, of his need of help, of his dependence upon forces which, unless they come to his aid, leave him undone and powerless. Religion is impossible except upon the terms of such a confession. But we are told that the surrender of our human will to any higher will is a "groveling" act, and that it emasculates man of his inherent strength. We are told to look at science and invention and democracy and we shall see that in all these realms the principle of progress has been the principle of self-assertion, not self-surrender. It is time to turn the tables on those who talk in this way. The truth is the direct opposite of their claim. In science, the supreme law of discovery was stated by Huxley in the dictum: Walk humbly before a fact! In invention we do not "harness the lightning," as we like to say, and compel it to do our work. Instead, the inventor having found out the nature and habits of the "lightning," surrenders himself and his task to it by means of some technical device, and behold, the "lightning" does his work for him. Democracy was once conceived to rest upon the independence of each citizen, but that conception is now giving way to the idea of the interdependence of all citizens. Everywhere human progress and welfare depend upon man's surrendering his will to forces and realities outside himself. Why, then, should any man be ashamed to confess his dependence upon God, and to seek power for his life through submission of his will to the gracious will of God?

Charles Clayton Morrison

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